

*Services for Children, Youth and their Families under the*

**COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES ACT**

*in Montgomery County, Virginia*

**A Guide for Parents**



*February 2006*

## **What is the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA?)**

In 1992, the Virginia General Assembly passed the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families. This act meets the needs of families with children and youth who have, or who are at risk of having, serious emotional or behavioral difficulties.

The goal of the CSA is to keep families together and provide services within the child's home and community. Through teams required by the CSA, state and local agencies are brought together to provide services that are intended to:

- Preserve and strengthen families.
- Identify needs and help families as early as possible.
- Provide services in the least restrictive setting possible.
- Develop service plans to meet the specific needs of children.
- Increase the communication between families and county agencies.
- Encourage public-private partnerships in serving families.
- Provide more community control and flexibility in the use of funding.

## **Who receives services under the CSA?**

Youth who may be eligible to receive services fall into one of two groups:

### **Mandated**

Youth for whom services to be provided are mandated by law include:

- Youth in foster care and those deemed to be imminently at-risk for placement into foster care.
- Youth who are special education eligible and the youth's Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires that the youth receive education in a private day or residential school setting.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who pays for CSA services?**

The Commonwealth of Virginia and local governments share the cost of services funded through the CSA. Effective January 1996, Virginia law requires you, as your child's parent or legal guardian, to contribute toward the cost of services based on income.

Your case manager will discuss this with you in more detail and help you understand whether the services your child receives require a co-payment. Your case manager will provide the necessary co-payment forms for you complete prior to submitting your referral packet to the FAPT.

### **Who to contact with questions?**

When you have questions about CSA, please contact your case manager. It is the responsibility of the case manager to coordinate services and exchange information with you.

### **Due process for complaints and appeals.**

The CPMT will ensure that due process for complaints and appeals are followed. In cases not before a court or subject to appeal under applicable statutes, the family will have the right to appeal the service plan of the FAPT

### **Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT)**

This is a policy-making and management team that oversees the implementation of the CSA. The team develops local policies and procedures for CSA, develops the fiscal policies for CSA, coordinates long-range, community-wide planning for resources and services needed by children and families in the community, manages the CSA budget, helps agencies to work together, hears appeals on FAPT decisions, and performs other management duties. The CPMT is also responsible for implementing new legislation affecting the CSA.

Members of the CPMT are appointed by the governing bodies of Montgomery County and include:

- Montgomery County Assistant Administrator
- Director, Montgomery County Human Services
- Director, Montgomery County Office on Youth
- Director, Montgomery County Dept. of Social Services
- Director, New River Valley Community Services
- Director, 27th District Juvenile Court Services Unit
- Representative, Montgomery County Public Schools
- Representative, New River Health District
- New River Community Action

### **Non-mandated**

Youth for whom services to be provided are not mandated by law include: Youth serviced through the Juvenile Court, Community Services Board, public schools and other county human services agencies who require assistance from more than one public agency, and whose needs cannot be met through the family's or public agencies' resources.

### **Who takes part in the CSA process?**

The CSA requires that the following human service agencies work together to implement the program in the community:

- Montgomery County Department of Social Services
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- New River Valley Community Services
- 27th District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court
- Montgomery County Office on Youth
- Montgomery County Human Services

In addition,

- Parent Representative, who may have a child/children with emotional or behavioral difficulties, is appointed
- Private Providers of services to children, youth and families can also participate.
- Above all, parents involvement is extremely important and welcomed!

## **Teams Working Together**

In each community, teams work together to implement the CSA. In Montgomery County these teams are the:

- Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT)
- Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT)

### **The Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT)**

The FAPT is an ongoing team formed to help you solve problems, explore services and financial resources, and plan for the changing needs of your child and family. Participation is flexible according to your child's needs and should include:

- Yourself
- Your child, when appropriate
- Representatives from public agencies who can suggest or provide services
- Others you may want to invite who are familiar with the strengths and needs of your family, including teachers, counselors, clergy, doctors, supportive friends, and others.

### **What are your responsibilities as part of the FAPT process?**

You are a respected participant in this process and have an important voice in decisions regarding services for your child. As a participant, you should:

- Exchange important information among all team members regarding your child (your case manager will ask you to sign a written consent to exchange information.)
- Ask questions and receive as much information as possible about services, programs and resources for

your child and your family.

- Ask for explanations of new or unfamiliar words and phrases.
- Be prepared to discuss your family's income, resources and insurance and what treatment services it may cover.

### **What can you expect from the FAPT process?**

Together with team members, you will develop a written service plan known as an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) to meet the needs of your child and your family. The IFSP is a written plan that includes information about the strengths and needs of your child and family, professionals involved with your family, services that have been provided, recommended services, and the objectives and goal for the services.

How is an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) Reviewed?

Each IFSP that comes before a FAPT must be reviewed, with the next review dates set at the FAPT meeting. Reviews may occur at any time from one to three months, depending upon the child's level of need and services approved. It is important to advise your child's case manager of any significant events or changes in your family's situation.